

February 16, 2009

EXHIBIT 2 HUH  
DATE 2-16-09  
HB 530

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Re: HB 530

Hearing: 2/16/09 House Human Services Committee

Dear Members of Human Services Committee:

This bill acknowledges that Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW's) make diagnoses as a part of their professional practice and that we utilize testing in some of our evaluations and assessments. The bill is designed to more accurately define and describe the practice of Clinical Social Work.

Persons seeking mental health services have the option of seeking support from two similar, licensed, groups of professionals: Licensed Clinical Social Workers & Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors. Each license has it's own requirements for licensure. LCSW's, like LCPC's, PROVIDE DIAGNOSES in the course of their work. The LCPC statutes, 37-23-102 (3)(a)(i), written in 1985, includes this language already.

The process of becoming an LCSW is arduous and thorough. Licensed Clinical Social Workers first complete a Master's program in Social Work at a accredited school of Social Work. (I completed my studies at the University of Denver.) After obtaining their Master's Degree in Social Work, the person can then become eligible for licensure. The MSW candidate for licensure then provides 3000 hours of mental health services under the supervision of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, a Licensed Psychologist or a Psychiatrist. During those 3000 hours the MSW develops their psychotherapy skills, knowledge of mental health diagnoses and clinical strategies to assist their clients in addressing mental illness. In the course of their Master's program and during the 3000 hours of work prior to licensure the MSW is also preparing for the licensing exam to become an LCSW.

The entire process includes extensive study of mental health diagnoses and an understanding of a plethora of testing instruments that are useful in evaluation and assessment. This process is critical for the ethical and competent provision of care of clients with mental illness.

The licensing exam, itself, is the final step. Successful passing of the licensing exam requires expertise of all mental health diagnoses as well as an understanding of individual and family dynamics, behavioral and emotional disturbances, as well as an understanding of testing instruments that assist with the diagnosis and understanding of the clients. Once licensed, the LCSW then generally moves into providing mental health psychotherapy and is able to be reimbursed for their services by various third party payers.

Diagnosing is an inherent part of providing psychotherapy and is a necessary step to understanding the client's distress and in accessing reimbursement. The use of evaluation and assessment tests is also an inherent, and often common, part of the process. Both of these elements are currently an integral part of the practice of social work and the language should reflect that.

Thank you for your time.

